

Initiative

Character... It starts with me!

MONTHLY EDUCATOR BULLETIN

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Vs. Idleness

I WILL:

- Do what is right before being told
- Not put off until tomorrow the things I can do today
- Contribute to the success of the whole team
- Be a part of the solution rather than the problem
- Look for ways to help others

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Recognizing and doing what needs to be done before I am asked to do it

Banks! You can't live with them; you can't live without them. If we aren't using our tax money to bail them out, we are getting a notice from them, saying "we" bounced a check and "we" have to pay an over draught fee. AAARRRGHH! Nevertheless, the idea of putting something away for a rainy day has always been seen as a good idea. Americans used to be great savers. Then, we got more interested in acquiring material luxuries and we stopped saving. The recession and the bank failures have gotten many of us back into our savings habit. So, that was probably an unforeseen benefit of a tough economic time.

When I was a kid, my school had a school savings program. Every week, I saved 10 cents in my account. You're thinking, "Last of the big savers!" But remember, in those days a dime also could have bought me one of my precious comic books. We had little envelopes for our deposits and, of course, no check writing privileges. But, it encouraged savings at a young age.

One of the "I will..." statements for Initiative says to "Do what is right before I am told." That's a challenge. I find it hard enough to do a difficult right thing when I get into the situation. To do it before I have to is even tougher!

Maybe the savings metaphor is a useful one here. I used to be a history teacher. So, I respect history in its many forms. In a way, each relationship has its own history. When a person whom I'm in a relationship with "judges" me, I want them to weigh our history together - what I have done well, what I have given, how often I have dealt with him or her honestly. I can rightly be held accountable for my recent actions, but a relationship is about more than "what have you done for me lately." It is also the history of feelings and deeds, good or bad. In that way, every relationship has a bank account. Good deeds, honest conversations, giving and receiving all go into the "deposits" for the two people. And yes, maybe thoughtless comments or actions may go on the "withdrawal" side. Life is not a ledger and the way we live cannot be reduced to a tally of points for and against our character. But, every thoughtful word or deed adds to our bank account with that person.

That's why relationships are so important in teaching. Learning starts with the student-teacher relationship. The teacher has to "bank" compliments, constructive suggestions, praise for specific behaviors, and comments which help the student monitor his educational progress. This



account will stand the teacher in good stead if the teacher-student relationship hits a rough spot. The student is more likely to continue to trust you if he or she can "bank" on the relationship history you two have. Taking the initiative to do what is right for the relationship before it's needed will "pay interest" later on.

-Bill Croskey, Retired school psychologist from the Loveland School District.

Bill recently joined the Character Council's Education Committee. Look for more from him in upcoming newsletters!



He that waits upon fortune,
is never sure of a dinner.
-Benjamin Franklin

Apply yourself. Get all the
education you can, but
then...do something. Don't
just stand there, make it
happen.
-Lee Lacocca

'For every person who
climbs the ladder of success,
there are a dozen waiting for
the elevator.
-Kathy Griffith

Even if you're on the right
track, you'll get run over if
you just sit there.
-Will Rogers, American
Humorist

Well done is better than
well said.
-Benjamin Franklin

A journey of a thousand
miles begins with a single
step.
-Confucius

If you want to change your
destiny, you have to be
active. If you just sit down,
life will be imposed on you.
-Madonna, in Le Figaro,
November 1998

Initiative Quotes

Half the things that people
do not succeed in are
through fear of making the
attempt.
-James Northcote

Do not go where the path
may lead, go instead where
there is no path and leave a
trail.
-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Leaders are those who make
the most of every moment, of
every opportunity, and of
every available resource.
-Theodore Roosevelt

A job well begun is half
done.
-Proverb

'If you think you're too small
to make a difference, you
haven't been in bed with a
mosquito.'
-Anita Roddick

You can't escape the
responsibility of tomorrow
by evading it today.
-Abraham Lincoln

The explanation for triumph
is in its first syllable.
-Zig Ziglar

You see, in life, lots of
people know what to do, but
few people actually do what
they know. Knowing is not
enough! You must take
action.
-Tony Robbins

Procrastination is the thief of
time.
- Edward Young

Procrastination is the art of
keeping up with yesterday.
-Don Marquis

Musical Chairs



Have your students play
musical chairs. Afterward,
ask them how they used
initiative in the game. In
order to get in the chair
first, you must think fast and
anticipate what must be done.

Edward Vernon Rickenbacker

Edward Vernon Rickenbacker achieved many things in his life, and without his initiative, he would have accomplished none of them. After the death of his father in 1904, 13-year-old Eddie began working any job he could to support his family. As machines became his passion, he taught himself everything he could about engineering, and even enrolled in a correspondence course to learn more. Soon he was racing cars for the machine company he worked for. He is credited

as the first man to go a mile a minute, and was then nicknamed "Fast Eddie." He raced in the Indy 500 5 times before he joined the Army to fight in World War I.

When he returned from the war in 1920, he started his own motor company, the Rickenbacker Motor Company. The cars his company produced were specifically engineered to be racing automobiles. His were the first cars to have four-wheel braking, which is now the

standard.

Without Eddie Rickenbacker's initiative in following his passion for engineering, the four wheel brake system would not exist as we know it.

Minutes from downtown Columbus, OH, there is an airfield named after him, Rickenbacker International Airport, which is dedicated to cargo and charter air traffic.



Well-defined

Attainable

Deadline

These are all qualities that a true goal should have. Have your students come up with a goal to be achieved by the end of the week and write it on its own piece of paper, and then share it with the class or a partner. They then keep this paper in a place that will constantly remind them to work on this goal. If by the end

of the week the student has achieved the goal, they can WAD up the paper and throw it at a target. This demonstrates taking initiative in achieving your goals helps you hit your target. If the student does not achieve the goal that they have written, they then have the opportunity to modify their goal to be more achievable. Do this every week this month. At the end of each week, have your students ask themselves these questions:

Was it easier to achieve the goal because you wrote it down and shared it with someone?

Why is it important to use initiative when trying to achieve a goal?

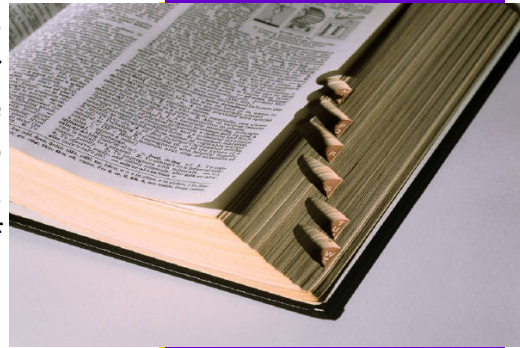
Next time you have a goal that you want to achieve, will you use this method to help you achieve it?

W.A.D.



Curriculum connection

Initiative's definition in the Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedic Dictionary is "power of taking the lead" or "the first act of procedure in enterprise." Its roots are from initium, or "beginning". These roots are also present in ambition, exit, circuit, issue, and transient. Have your students come up with other word forms of "initiative", such as initial, initially, initiate, initiation, initialize. Discuss how these words relate to the Latin root of "beginning" as well as how the other words related to the same root are related.



Wishes vs. Goals

Divide the board into two columns and label each -one as wishes and one as goals. Have the students write lists on the board of wishes and goals. After the lists are done evaluate each item and whether it truly belongs in the

column it is in. For example, wishes are things you want to come true but you have no control over-"I wish that it doesn't rain at recess." Goals are items you have control over-"I want to be doctor." Move each item into the

correct category as it is evaluated. Remind your students to evaluate their goals with these same guidelines when they set goals in their lives.



Initiative Booklist

The Secret of Making Wishes Come True: Goal Setting and Visualization for Kids
-Winsome Couatts

How To Get The Things You Want (And Have Fun Doing It)
-Winsome Couatts

Goal Setting For Students
-John Bishop

What Do You Really Want?
How to Set a Goal and Go for It! A Guide for Teens
-Beverley K Bachel

The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens
-Sean Covey

Bringing the Rain To Kapiti Plain
-Verna Aardema

Oh The Places You'll Go
-Dr. Suess

Miss Rumphius
-Barbara Cooney





**The Character Council of Greater
Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky**

P.O. Box 33144
Cincinnati, Ohio 45233

Mary Andres Russell, Executive Director

Phone: 513.467.0170

Fax 513.941.2755

E-mail: mrussell@charactercincinnati.org

www.charactercincinnati.org

Written by Jacqueline Tomey and Jill Tomey ,
Education Committee Co-Chairs

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Character...It Starts With Me!

Character in the Classroom *Continuously*

There are many ways that you can teach the Character Quality of Month. Here are just a few suggestions:

- Ask students to make posters to hang in the classroom or around the school.
- Challenge students to find quotes, news stories, current (or classic) songs or movies that portray the character quality of the month. Be sure to share these with the class and “archive” these to use in future years.
- Add the character trait of the month to the spelling word list. (Even if it is posted in the classroom to copy!)
- Offer for students to make a video or write a rap that demonstrates the Character Quality of the Month.
- If you teach younger students, see if you can “borrow” some older students to lead your students in an activity or switch the roles and have the younger students “teach” a rhyme to the older students.
- If you teach older students, you can be the initiator in the above activities.
- Invite local business leaders or small business owners to talk about the importance of a character trait. If you teach older students, aim to get a representative from a business that typically hires teens so that they can relate the importance of good character when applying for and *keeping* a job.
- Men and women in uniform usually make impressive guest speakers. Police departments, fire departments and military recruiting offices are usually willing to come into a classroom. Do not be afraid to give them specific requests or guidelines for speaking so that it is pertinent to the lessons of the month.
- Always have a generic character activity planned and ready to go that you can use as filler when you have time to kill or that a substitute teacher can use in your absence.